

AKIRA

18



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KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 18

AMID THE RUINS

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Twenty-thirty. The world stands poised at the edge of World War IV. An explosion of thermo-nuclear proportions has been set off in **Neo-Tokyo**. The world, particularly the superpowers, wonder what has happened. In **Neo-Tokyo** in a section known as the "old city", a band of teenaged delinquents led by **Kaneda** encountered **Number 26**, a child named **Takashi** who used extraordinary telekinetic abilities to injure **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends.

As a result **Kaneda** and **Tetsuo** become entangled in a power struggle between a mysterious military and scientific organization led by a man known only as the **Colonel** and an underground resistance group bent on putting a stop to the Colonel's activities.

Among the resistance, **Kaneda** meets **Kay**—a girl he alternately maddens and tries to seduce—and Kay's "brother", **Ryu**. Other important resistance members include Ryu's superior, the opposition party leader **Nezu**, and a powerful religious

leader with strong precognitive gifts, **Lady Miyako**.

The **Colonel** has a number of children like **Number 26** under his control. Each child possesses a distinct set of psychic talents and is identified by a number marked on the hand. At one time, **Lady Miyako** was **Number 19** in this series.

Number 28 is **Akira**, so powerful that since the war he has been suspended in cryogenic sleep.

The Colonel's staff conducts experiments which awaken tremendous telepathic potential in **Tetsuo**, who is redubbed **Number 41**. Able to shrug off the most serious injuries, **Tetsuo** goes on a killing spree, murdering one of Kaneda's friends and even attacking **Kaneda**. Then, followed by **Kay** and **Kaneda**, **Tetsuo** sets out in search of **Akira**, whose powers he fears may rival his own.

Tetsuo repels soldiers armed with the most sophisticated weaponry. The scientists monitoring Akira's cryogenic sleep realize that even in hibernation, Akira's power is responding to Tetsuo's psychic energy. When **Tetsuo** reaches Akira's resting place, the cryogenic chamber cracks from within and **Akira**—dazed and docile following his long sleep—emerges.



Akira



The Colonel



Tetsuo



Masaru



Terrified of what may occur, the **Colonel** summons the powerful SOL military satellite and orders that its laser cannon be fired at **Tetsuo** and **Akira**. The two are separated by the blasts. **Akira** is saved by **Kay** and **Kaneda**, but **Tetsuo** is less fortunate. The laser strikes his left arm.

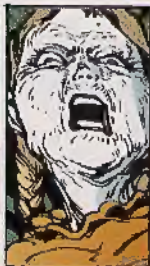
Neo-Tokyo is placed in a state of military emergency following the disaster. "Caretaker robots" patrol the streets, dealing harshly with looters and restoring order. Discredited and made a scapegoat following the disaster, the **Colonel**—who successfully conceals the truth about what has occurred despite leaks to the media—decides to use the emergency as an excuse to hunt down and destroy his enemies. With the aid of his inner circle, the **Colonel** stages a successful coup d'état.

Nezu, planning to exploit

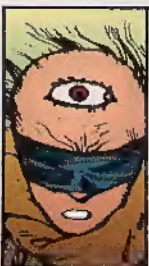
Akira for his own purposes, kidnaps the child and orders his staff to kill **Kaneda**, **Kay**, and **Chiyoko**, who nevertheless manage to escape and free **Akira**. He is, however, stolen from them again, this time by **Sakaki**, **Miki**, and **Mozu**—young psychics trained by **Lady Miyako**, who now knows that **Nezu** has betrayed her. The **Colonel**, with his troops and his psychic children, is also frantically trying to find **Akira** before he fully awakens. On the **Colonel's** orders, **Takashi** kills **Mozu** during a psychic showdown. **Nezu** corners **Sakaki** and **Akira**, but before he can do them any harm, **Miki** sacrifices her life, enabling the pair to escape. **Sakaki** hides **Akira** in a dumpster. There he is found by **Ryu**—one of the few people who doesn't recognize the child. **Ryu** and **Akira** encounter **Nezu**, who blurts out the boy's name.



Chiyoko



Kiyoko



Seer



Kay

Ryu realizes that his former master is a traitor. When **Nezu** tries to kill them, **Ryu** guns him down and leaves him for dead.

As **Sakaki** and **Ryu** fight for control of **Akira**, they are suddenly joined by **Kaneda**, **Kay** and **Chiyoko**. Then all six of them are surrounded by the Colonel's troops. **Sakaki** makes a last ditch effort to escape and is killed, her spirit embraced by **Lady Miyako** as she dies.

Takashi fondly greets **Akira** and reintroduces him to their fellow psychics **Kiyoko** and **Masaru**. Then **Nezu**, dying and determined on revenge, arrives and tries to kill **Akira**, killing **Takashi** instead.

The trauma of **Takashi's** death galvanizes **Akira**, who fully awakens and unleashes a light blast powerful enough to devastate the entire city. Acting quickly, **Masaru** and **Kiyoko** sweep most of the people in the area upward, into the shelter of a skyscraper. The entire resistance group is separated, and **Kaneda** is last seen vanishing towards the sky. In the wake of the disaster, **Lady Miyako** opens her temple and offers shelter and comfort to those in need.

Afterwards, as **Akira** sits

alone, telekinetically playing with bits of rubble, **Tetsuo** finally reappears. **Neo-Tokyo** is completely cut off from the outside world, and in the western part of the city the **Great Tokyo Empire** is formed—a monarchy with **Akira** on the throne and **Tetsuo** as his prime minister. Together the pair use their powers, healing the sick, wielding control of the faithful, and organizing their subjects into fighting units that destroy caretaker robots and conquer military and medical relief parties sent from the outside world. In addition, **Tetsuo** conducts deadly tests on special followers, hoping to find more psychics fit for training. **The Empire** is eventually infiltrated by teams of spies sent from the outside to learn the truth about what is happening in the city.

Masaru and **Kiyoko** are sick with withdrawal from the drug which augments and helps to channel the powers of all psychics. **Kay** is trying to treat them with drugs she's been able to steal and get on the Black Market. Following an injection, **Kiyoko**, whose gift is precognition, tells **Kay** that she must seek out **Number 19**.



Lady Miyako



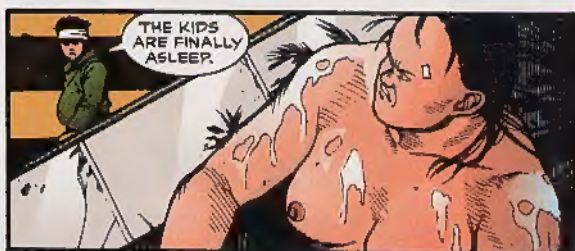
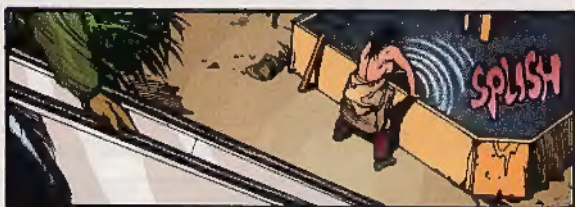
Lt. Yamada



Tetsuo's Aide



Ryu

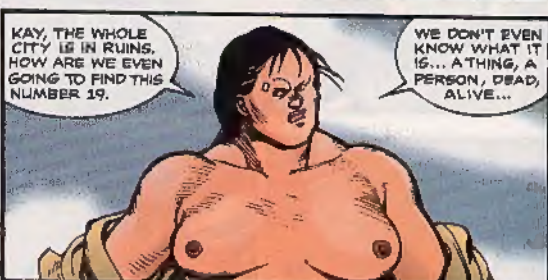




DID YOU
FIND OUT
ANYTHING
MORE ABOUT
THIS
"NUMBER
19"?



ALL SHE SAID WAS
THAT I SHOULD ASK
NUMBER 19 FOR
HELP.



KAY, THE WHOLE
CITY IS IN RUINS.
HOW ARE WE EVEN
GOING TO FIND THIS
NUMBER 19.

WE DON'T EVEN
KNOW WHAT IT
IS... A THING, A
PERSON, DEAD,
ALIVE...



I KNOW
WHERE TO
GO...



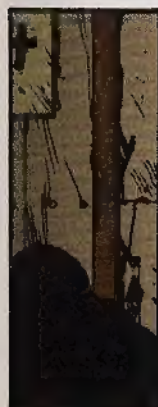
WAIT A MINUTE!
DO YOU KNOW
WHERE THAT IS? IT'S
LADY MIYAKO'S
TERRITORY.



I KNOW. BUT
SHE SAID IF I
GET THERE I'LL
FIND NUMBER
19.



LET'S
HURRY.



YOU'RE DRUNK,
AREN'T YOU?

WHERE HAVE
YOU BEEN FOR
THE PAST THREE
DAYS? DID YOU
FIND OUR
FRIENDS?

WHADDAYA TO
MEAN
"OUR"
FRIENDS?

ISN'T THAT
WHERE YOU
WERE?
LOOKING
FOR THEM?

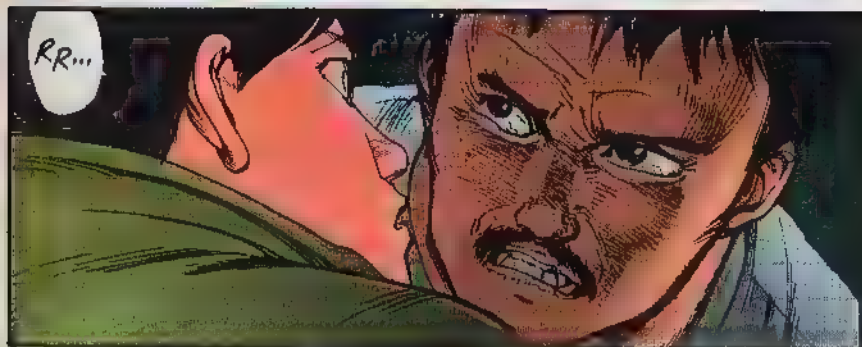
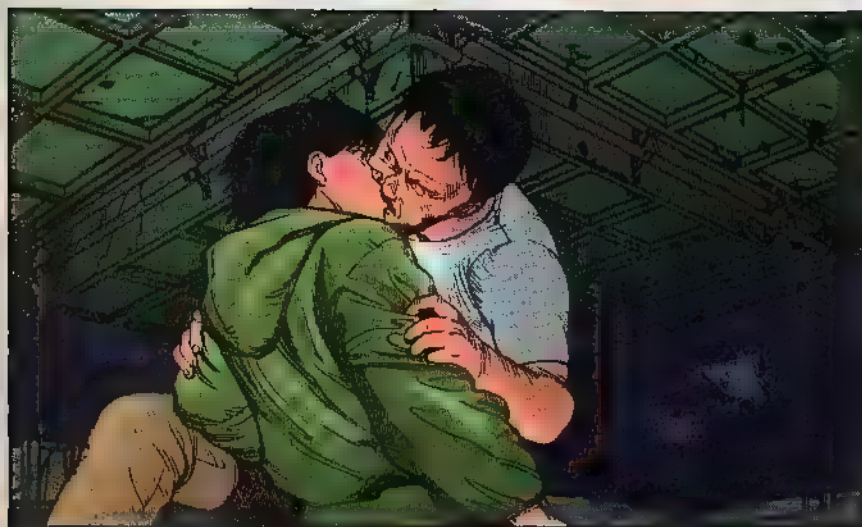
Scrape

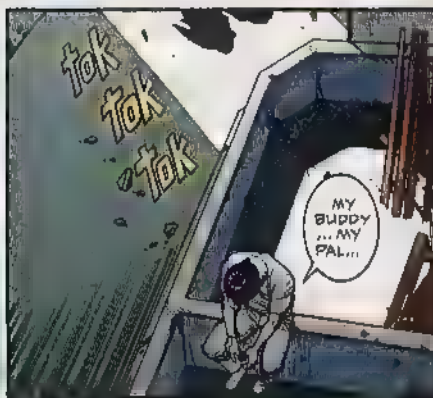
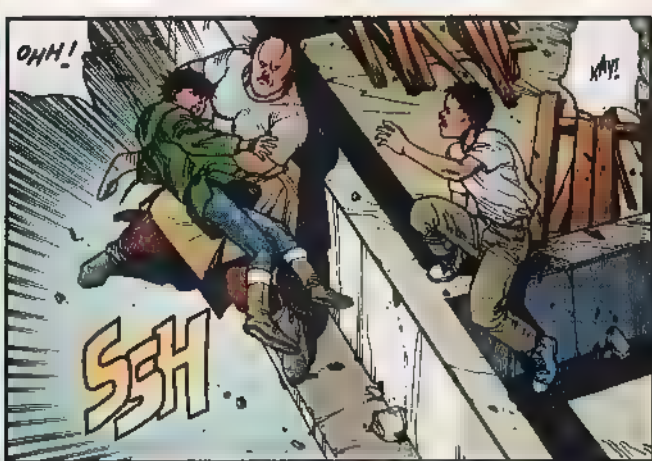
LET
ME
SEE...

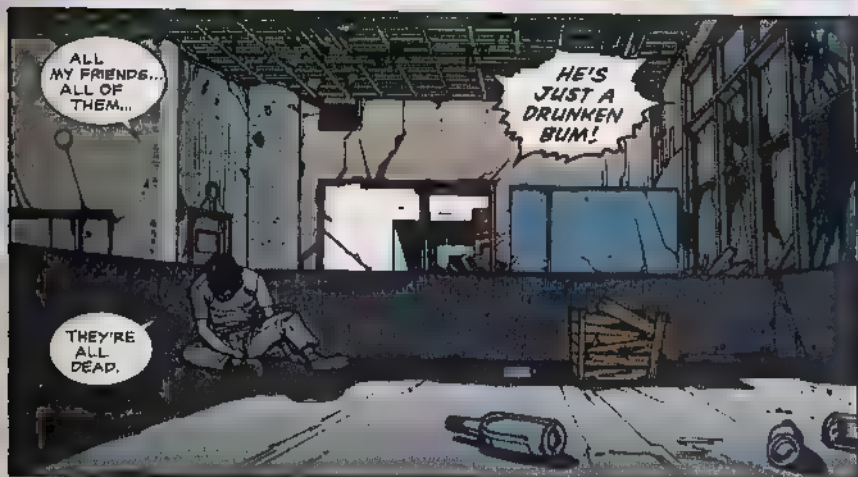
I CAN HANDLE
THIS ONE...

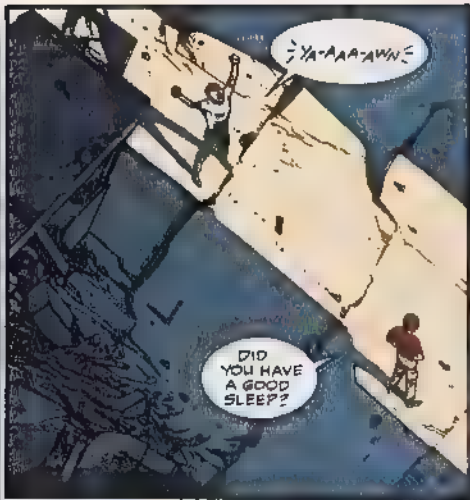
...HUNH,
KAY?

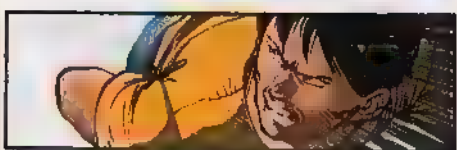
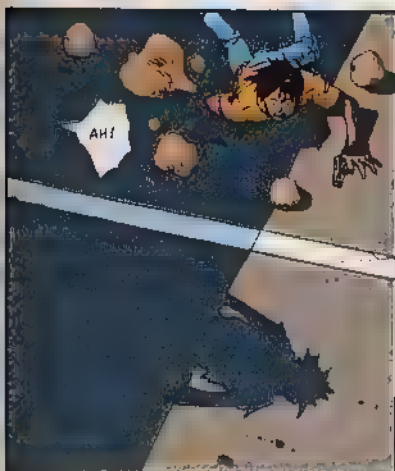
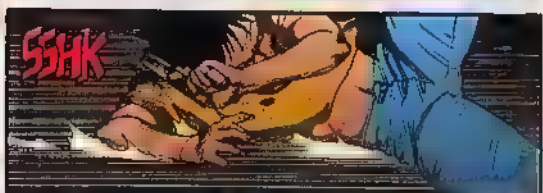
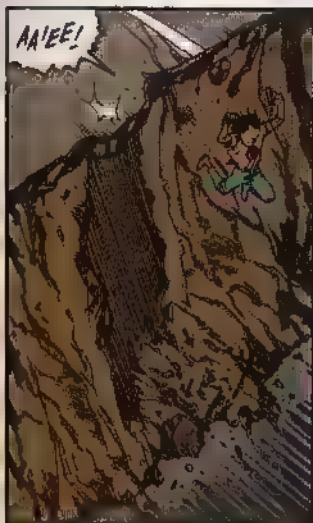
AND
YOU'D
BETTER
TAKE
SOMETHING
A LITTLE
LIGHTER.

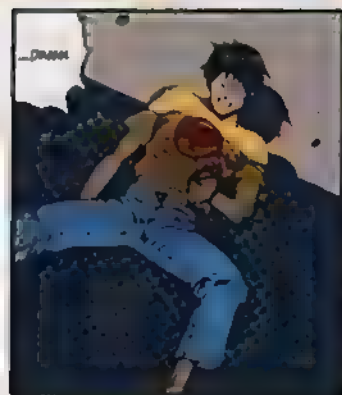
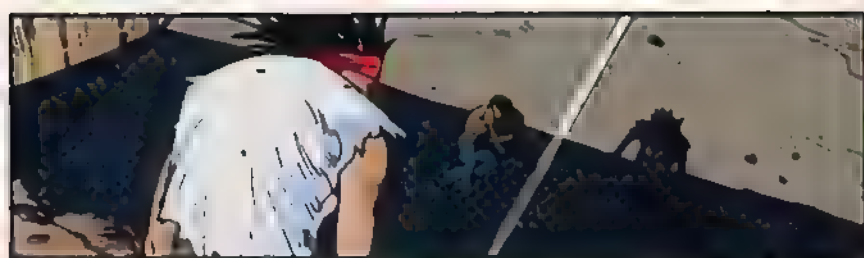










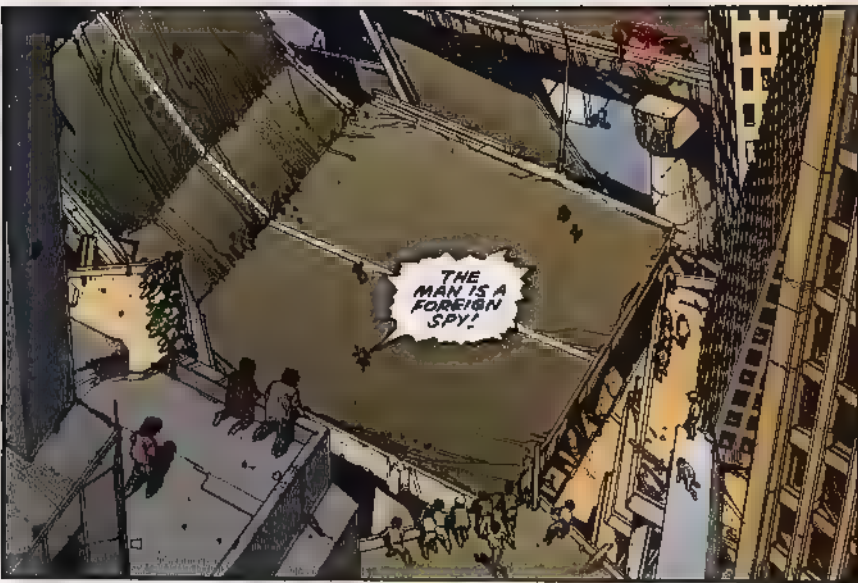


WELL? DID YOU
TAKE HIM ALIVE?



GOOD! GET SET FOR
A PUBLIC
EXECUTION.





OURS IS A YOUNG NATION, AND SOME MIGHT SAY IT IS VULNERABLE!

BUT, AS THE TWIG IS BENT, SO THE TREE IS INCLINED! WE MUST BEGIN AS WE MEAN TO GO ON!

IT'S TRUE, WE ARE STILL FORMING OUR LAWS AND WE DON'T YET HAVE A WRITTEN CHARTER OR CONSTITUTION.



INTERFERENCE FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF THE INTERFERENCE COMES FROM THE UNITED STATES OR THE SOVIET UNION...

...OR EVEN FROM JAPAN HERSELF!



GRR...

GET HOLD OF YOURSELF! QUIT SHOVING!

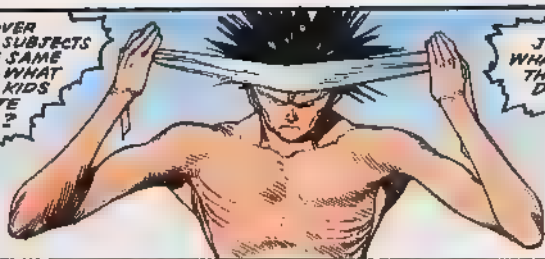


THIS LAND IS OUR LAND!

OVER AND OVER AGAIN, OUR SUBJECTS ASK US THE SAME QUESTION-- WHAT MAKES THE KIDS IN THE ELITE SO SPECIAL?

JUST WHAT CAN THEY DO?

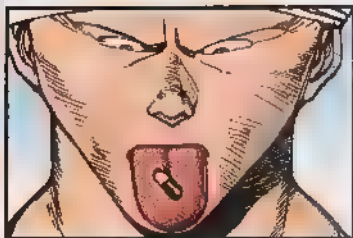
YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO ASK!



NOW...

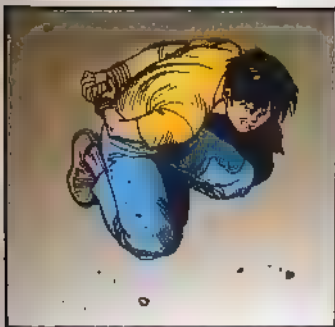
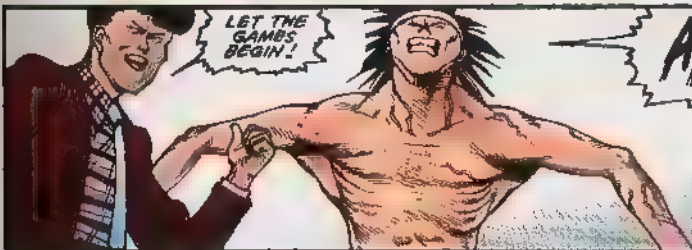
SEE FOR YOURSELF!

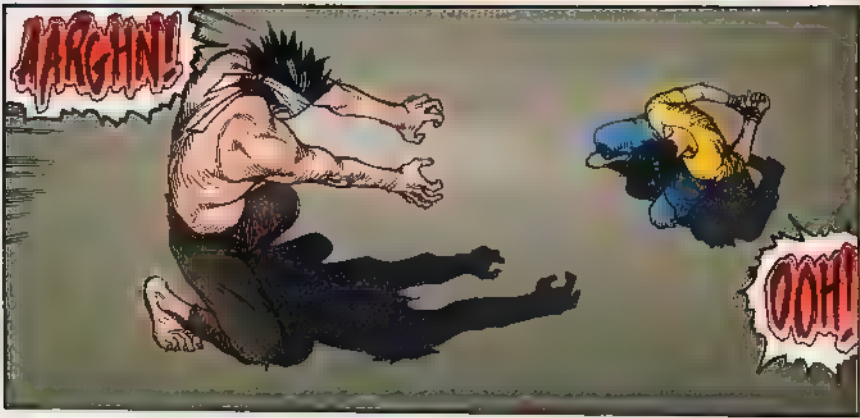
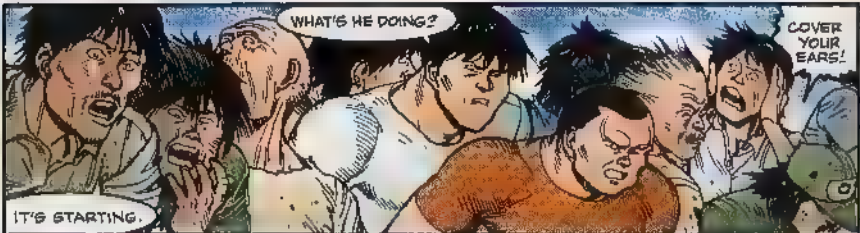
YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW.

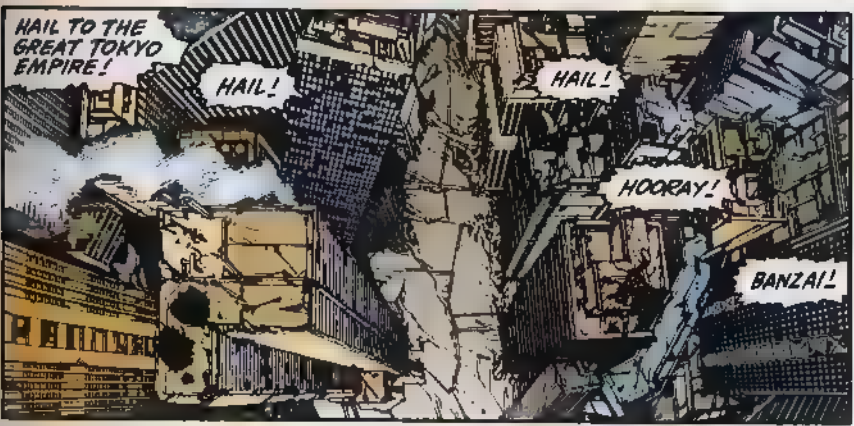
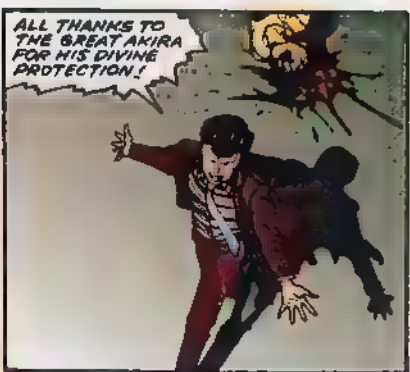
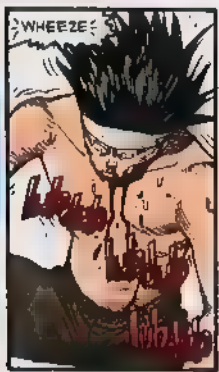


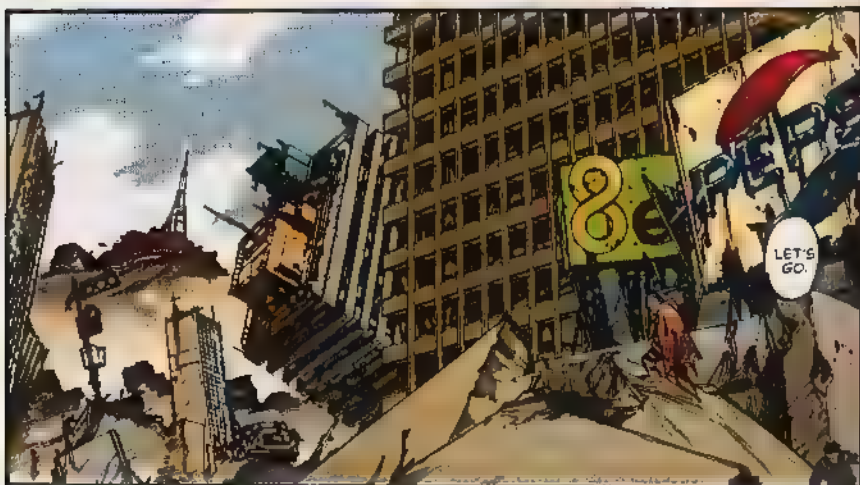
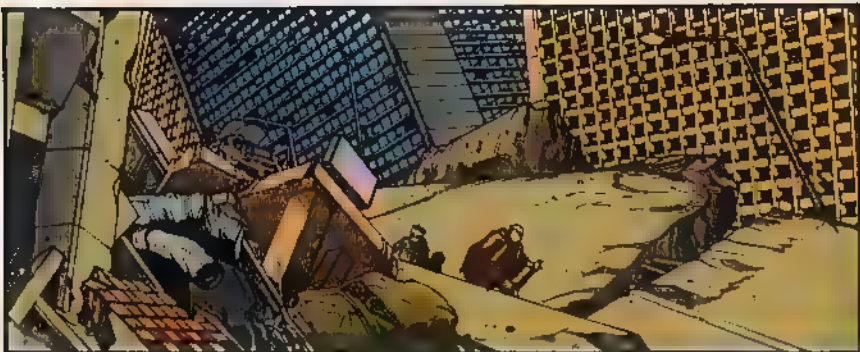
LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

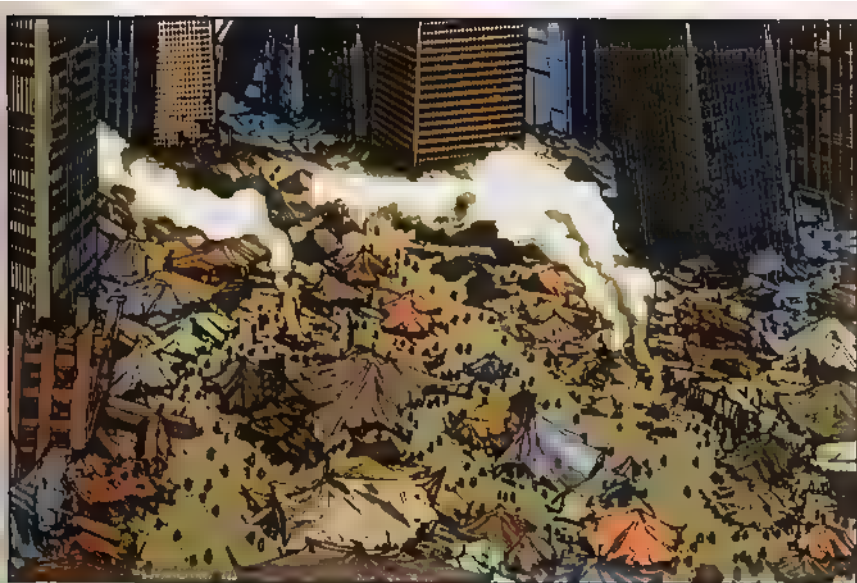
AARGH!!

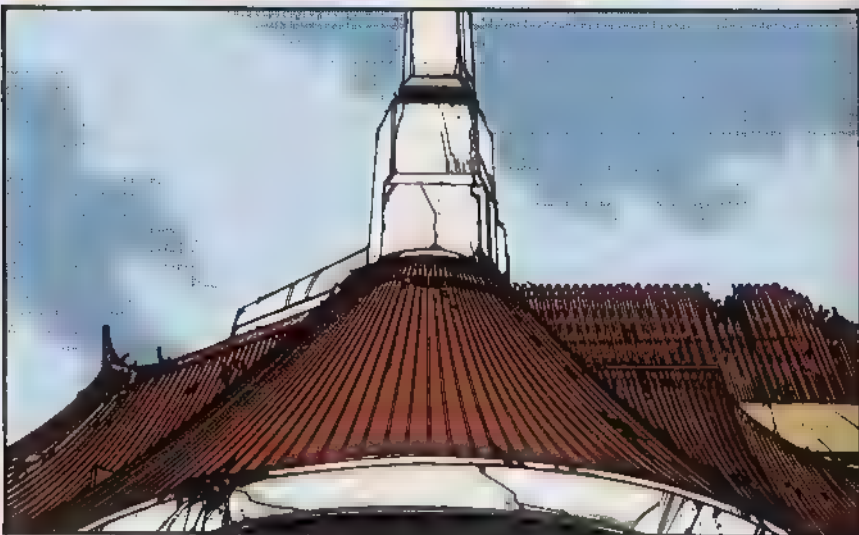


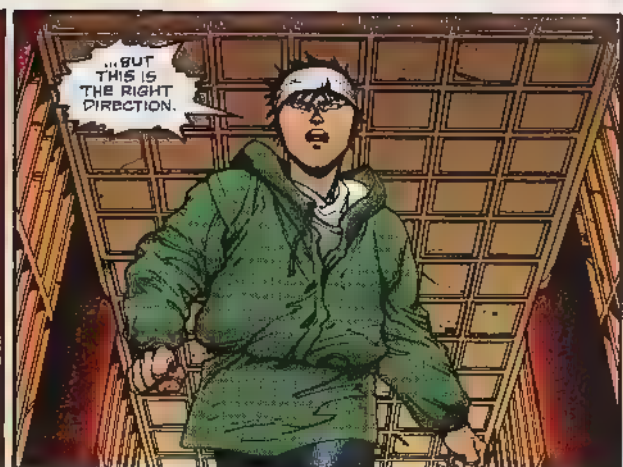


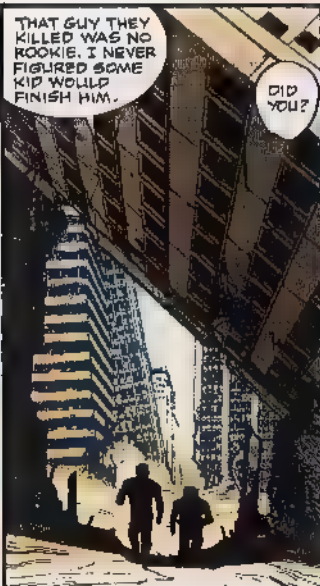






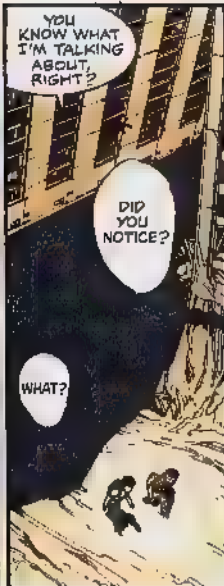






THAT GUY THEY
KILLED WAS NO
ROOKIE. I NEVER
FIGURED SOME
KID WOULD
FINISH HIM.

DID
YOU?



YOU
KNOW WHAT
I'M TALKING
ABOUT,
RIGHT?

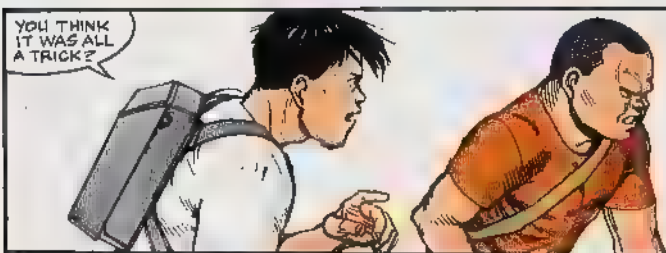
DID
YOU
NOTICE?

WHAT?



THAT BIG, UGLY
APE WAS TAKING
SOMETHING.

YOU MEAN,
SOME KIND OF DRUG?
I SAW HIM TAKE
SOMETHING OFF
THE TRAY.



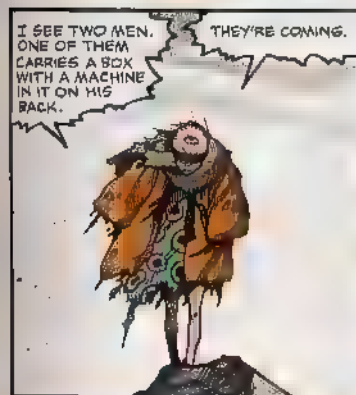
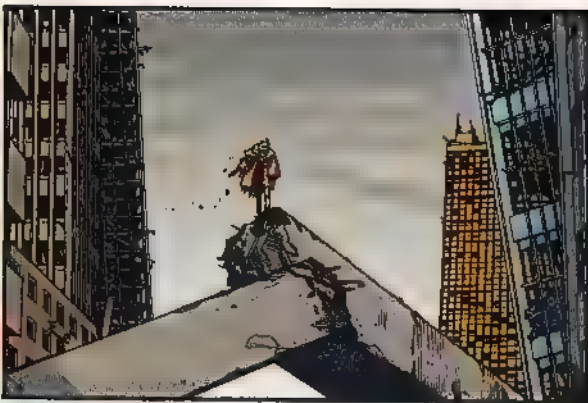
YOU THINK
IT WAS ALL
A TRICK?

NO! I'M NOT
SURE. LET'S WATCH
OURSELVES.



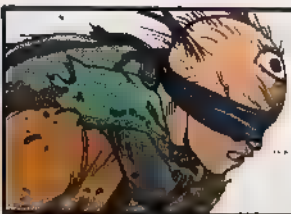
THE WHOLE
WORLD'S GONE
CRAZY.

IT DOESN'T
PAY TO FORGET
THAT.





THEY ARE
SHORTSIGHTED!



THE PATH THEY
FOLLOW WILL
TAKE THEM RIGHT
INTO YOUR
HANDS!



WHAT
WAS
THAT
GUY?



BEATS ME!



AAH!



MAH?



FOR EVERY
ROACH YOU KILL
THERE ARE AT
LEAST THIRTY
MORE.

THAT'S WHAT MY
MAMA ALWAYS
TOLD ME.

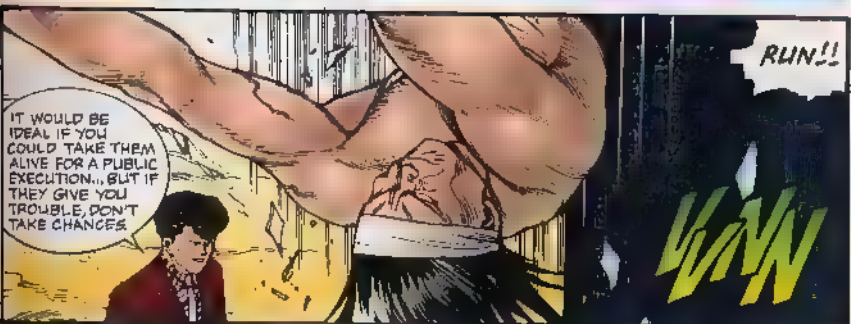


WE'LL
HAVE TO
FIGHT
OUR
WAY
OUT!



RIGHT!

KRASH



RUN!!

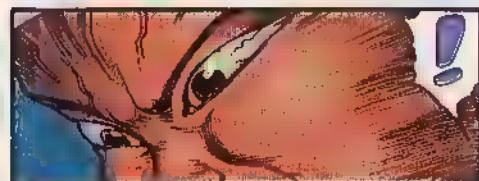
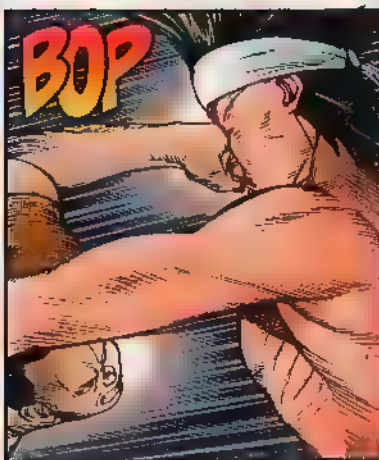
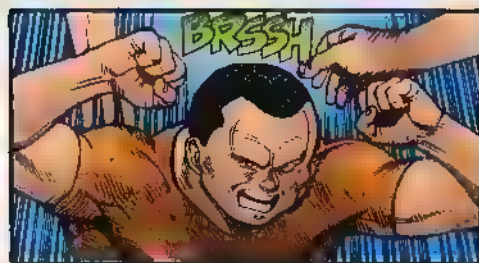
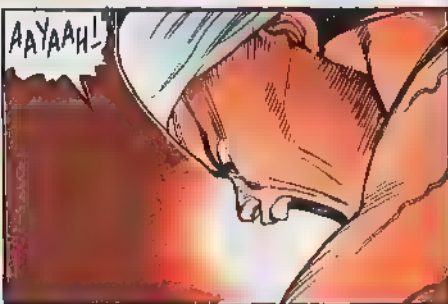
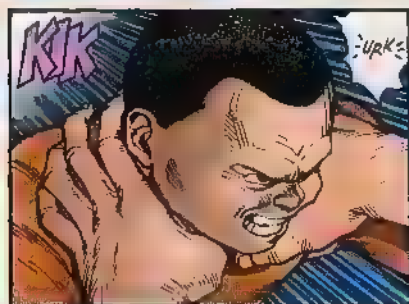
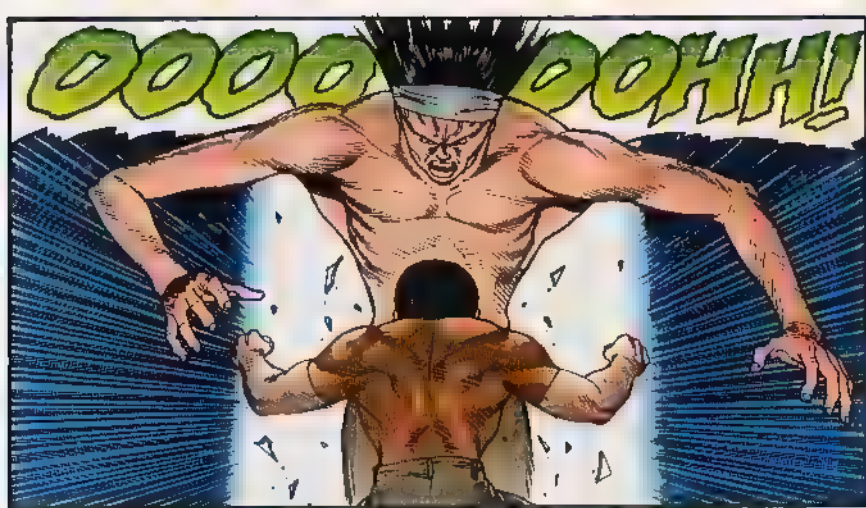
WNN

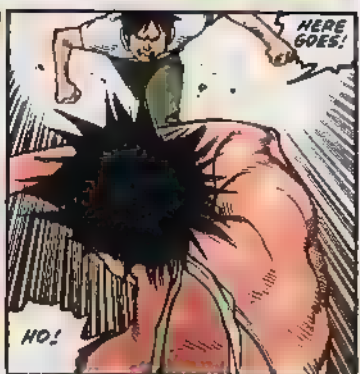
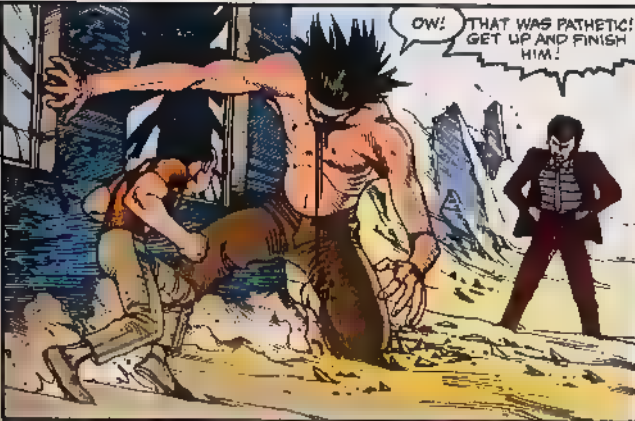


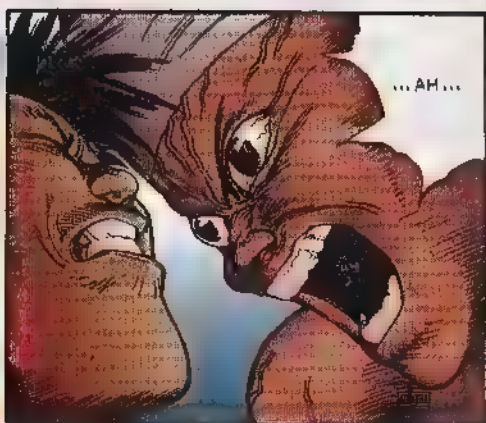
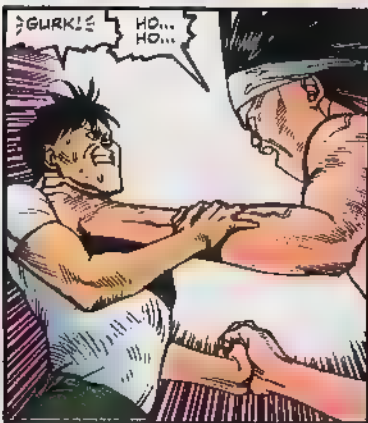
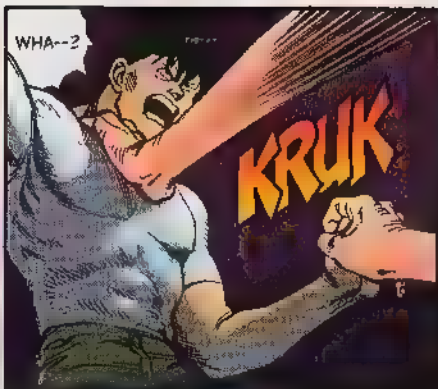
chik

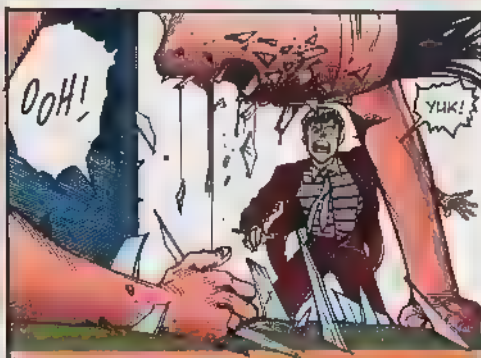
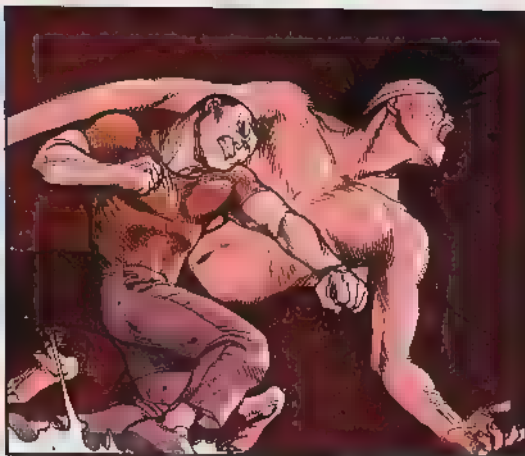


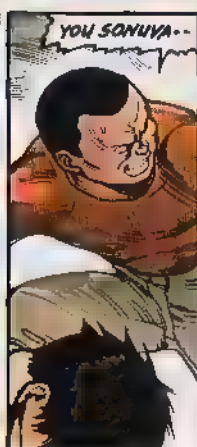
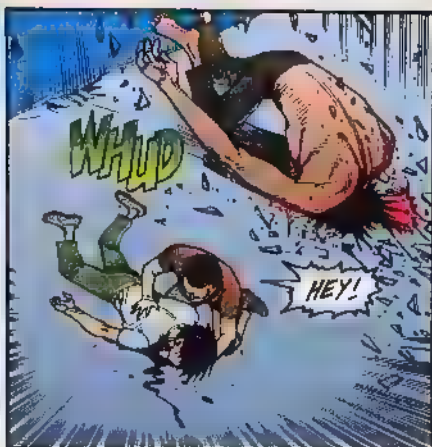
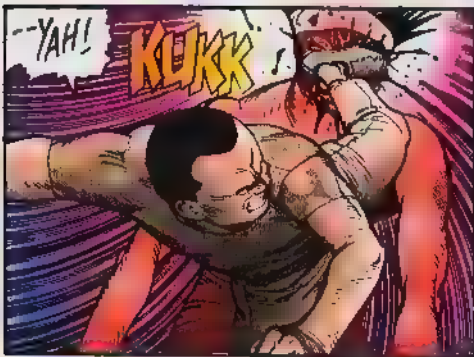
ALL RIGHT, YOU BASTARD, COME ON!

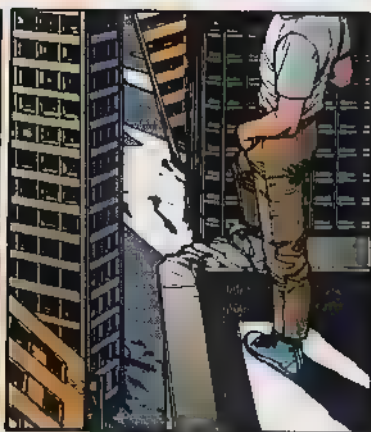


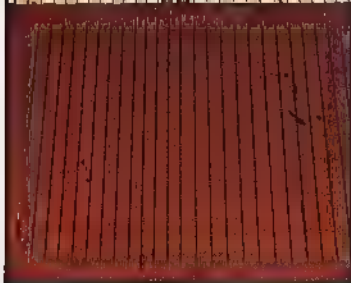












I KNEW
YOU'D
COME.



BUT...

...JUST WHAT
PROOF DO I HAVE
THAT YOU'RE REALLY
WHO YOU SAY YOU
ARE?

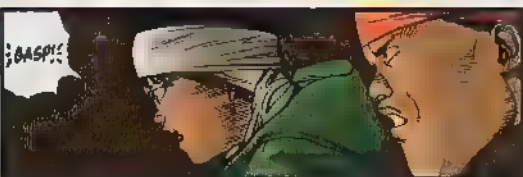


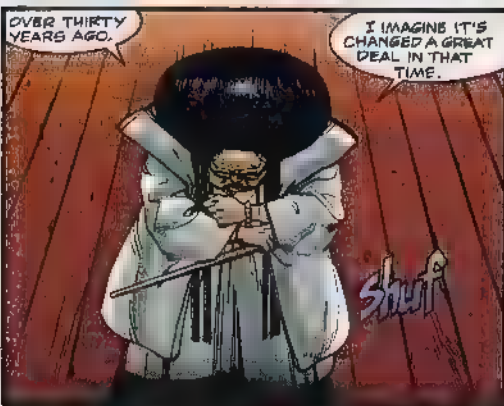
THESE EYES
OF MINE CAN
NO LONGER
SEE IT...

...BUT ON MY
PALM YOU'LL
FIND THE
PROOF YOU
SEEK.



GAASP!!





OUR ACQUAINTANCE WAS
VERY SLIGHT.

AFTER A
FEW MEETINGS,
THEY WERE PUT
IN ISOLATION,
TOTALLY LOCKED
AWAY.

IN A
NURSERY
THAT LOOKED
LIKE A BIG
GREEN-
HOUSE.

WHEN THEY ARE
FEELING BETTER, YOU
MUST BRING THEM TO
SEE ME.

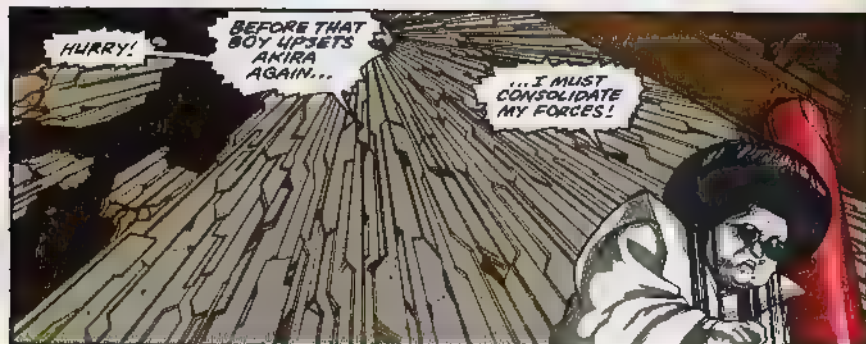
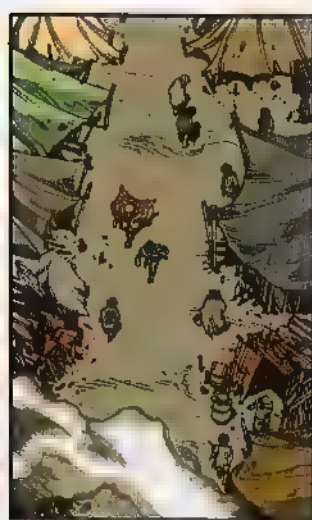
BUT,
WHY?!

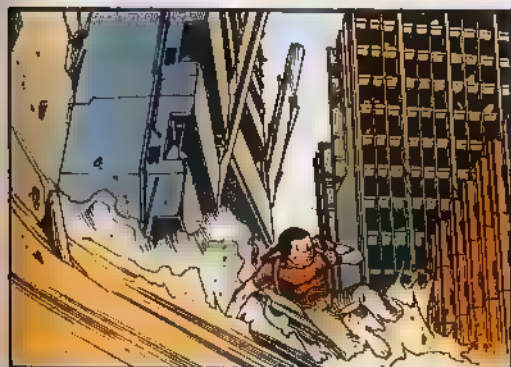
WON'T
YOU AT
LEAST-?!

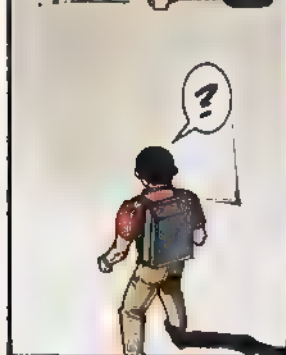
EXPLANATIONS
CAN WAIT!

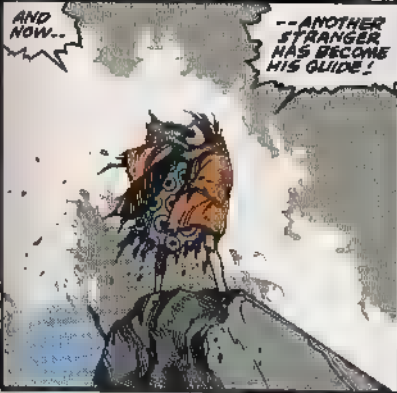
WHAT
IS
URGENT
IS THAT
THEY
TAKE
THAT
MEDICINE
!

XXXXXXXX









AND NOW...

-- ANOTHER STRANGER HAS BECOME HIS GUIDE!



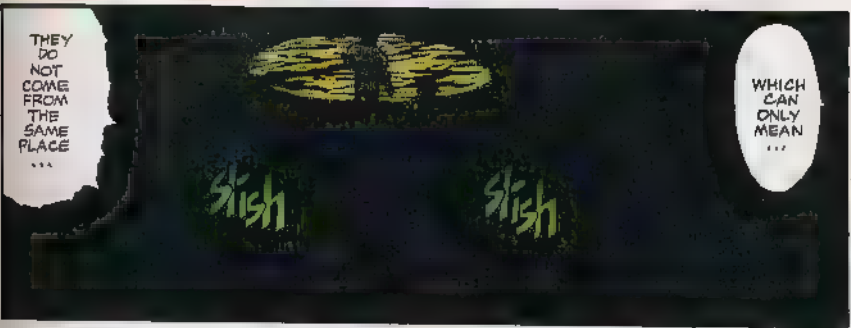
THEY HAVE PASSED BEYOND THE RANGE OF MY VISION!



ANY OF THE SPY'S OTHER FRIENDS STILL WITH US?



I CAN'T BE CERTAIN...
...BUT THE SPY IS WARY OF HIS NEW COMPANION.

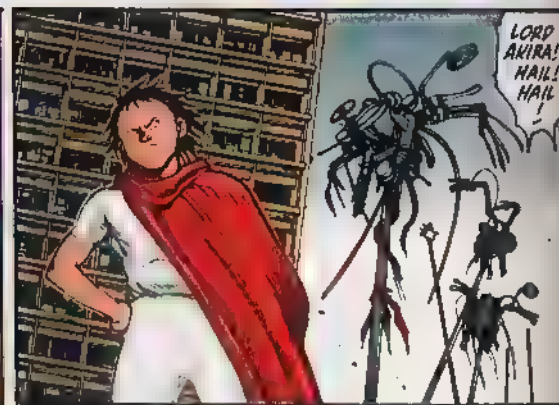
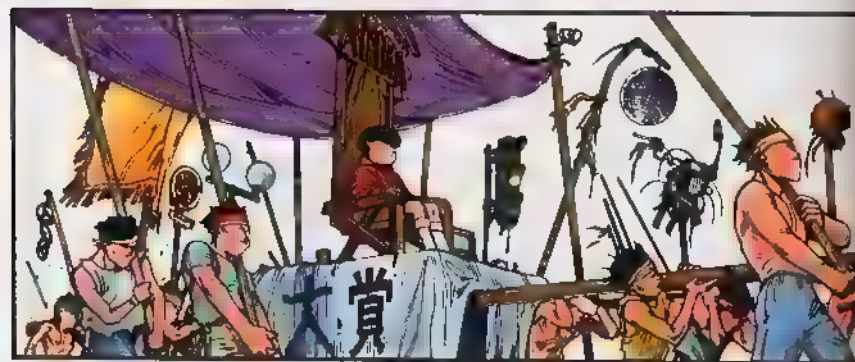
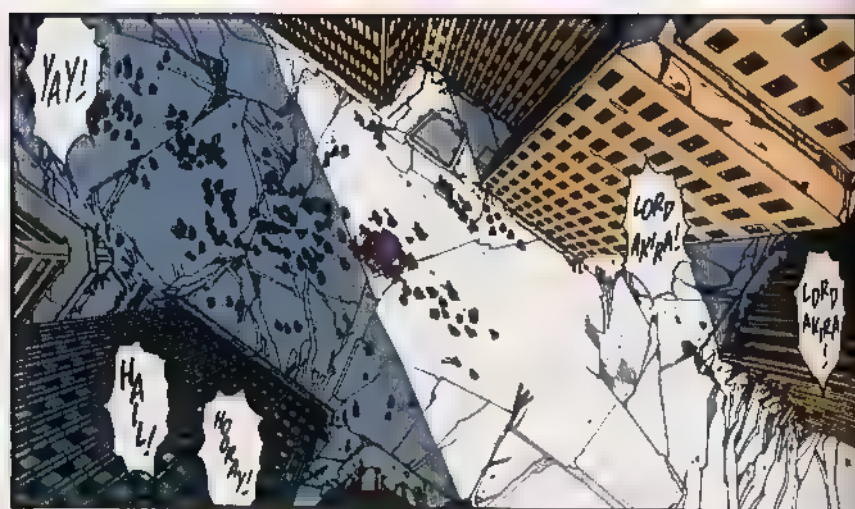


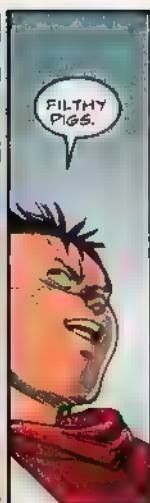
THEY DO NOT COME FROM THE SAME PLACE

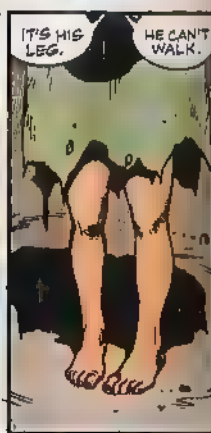
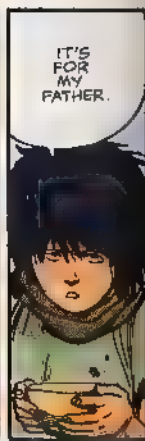
WHICH CAN ONLY MEAN



...THAT THERE EXISTS ONE GROUP BEYOND LORD AKIRA'S REACH!





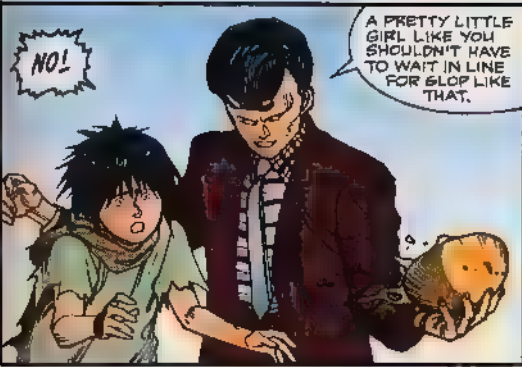




AH, BUT ONCE YOU'RE
NATURALIZED, MASTER TETSUO
WILL SEE TO IT YOUR FATHER'S
LEG IS HEALED.



BUT...



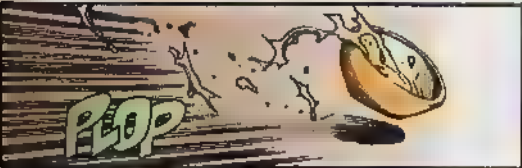
NO!

A PRETTY LITTLE
GIRL LIKE YOU
SHOULDN'T HAVE
TO WAIT IN LINE
FOR GLOP LIKE
THAT.



I'LL TAKE
YOUR FATHER
SOMETHING
NOURISHING.

BUT, I
JUST...

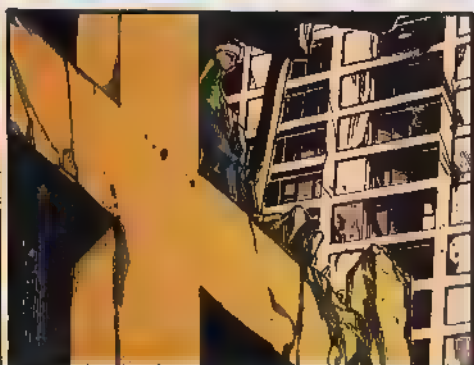
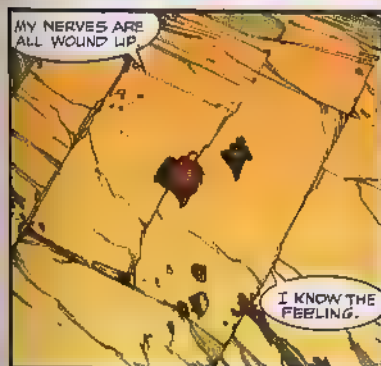
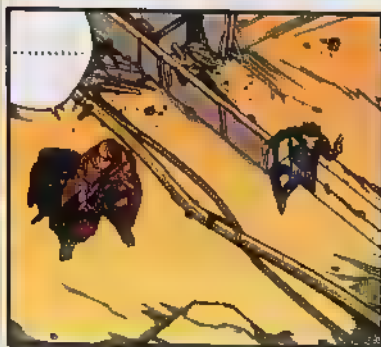
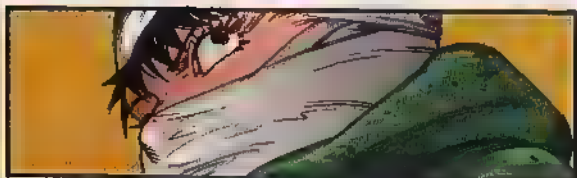
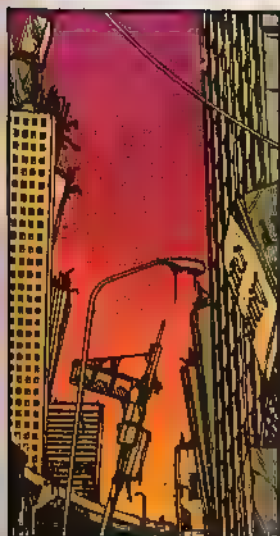
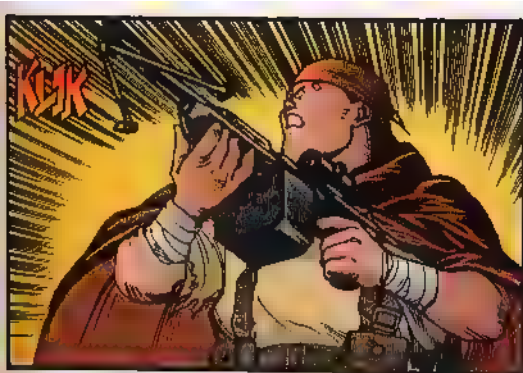


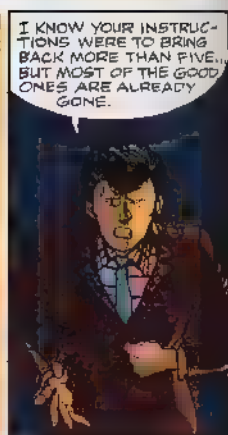
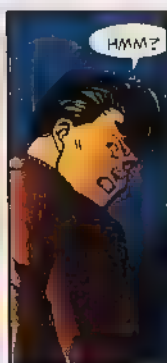
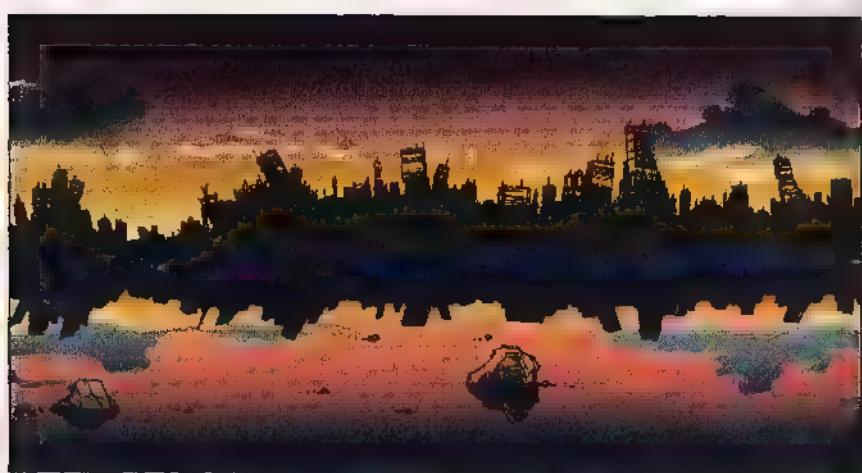
PLOP



YOU
CAN SERVE
OUR EMPIRE.
YOU
CAN
SERVE MASTER
TETSUO.
DO
YOU
UNDERSTAND
ME?





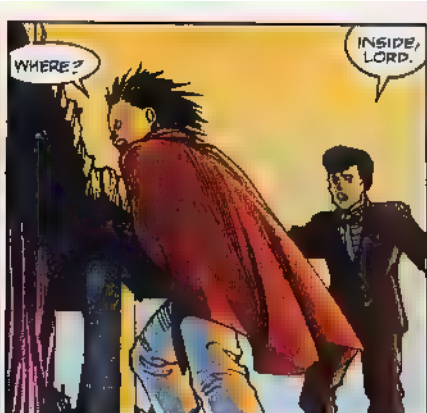




HOW MANY ARE THERE?



THREE OF THEM.



WHERE?

INSIDE, LORD.



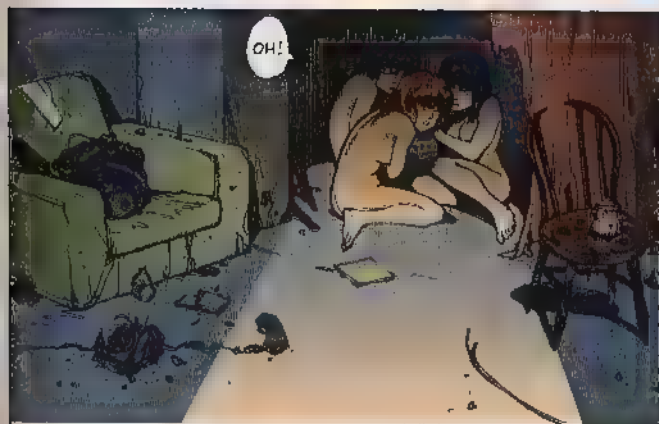
MASTER TETSUO, PLEASE... BE GENTLE WITH THEM. SOME OF THEM STILL HAVE FAMILIES.

PLEASE...

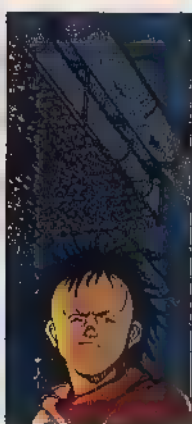
...TRY NOT TO KILL THEM.

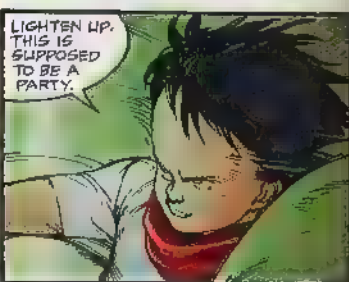
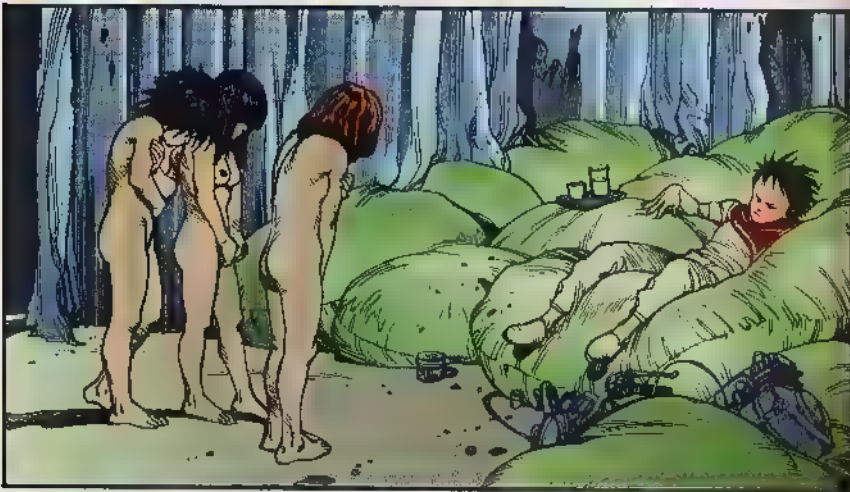


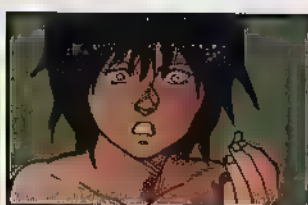
SLAM

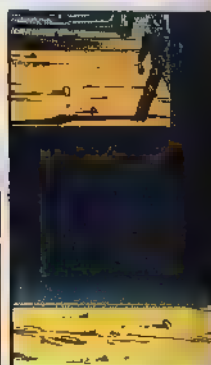
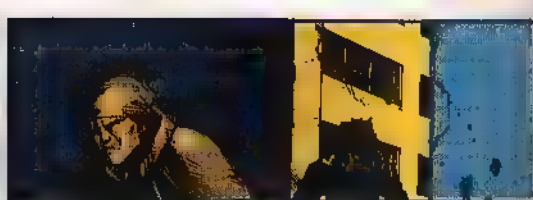


OH!





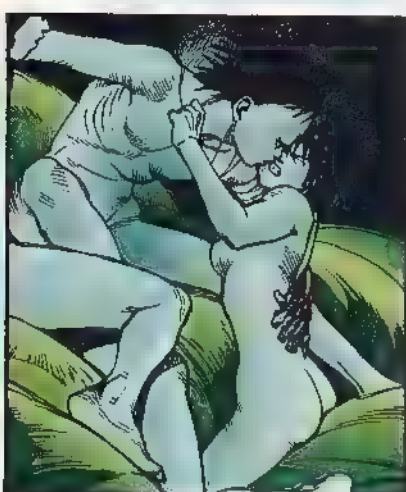
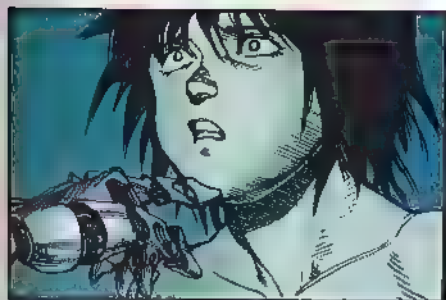
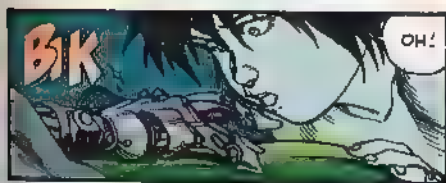
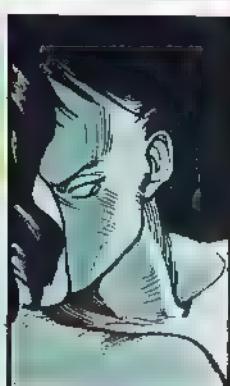
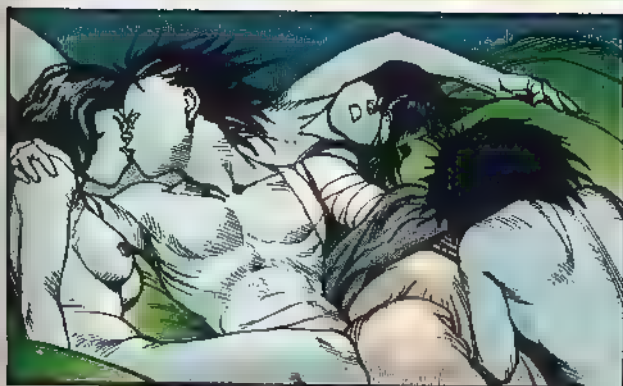
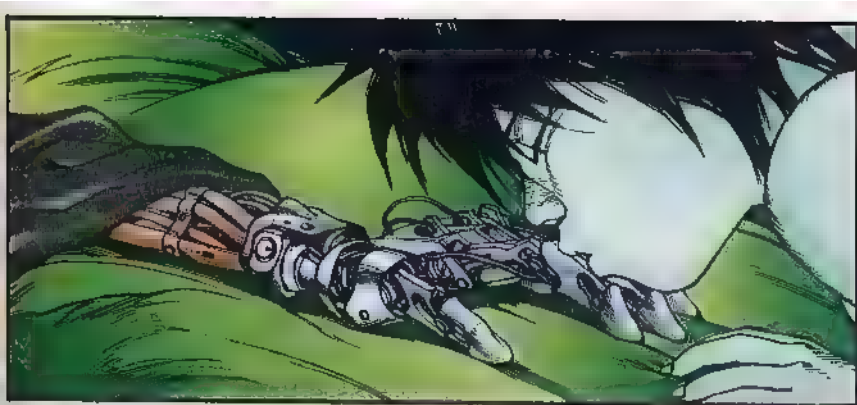


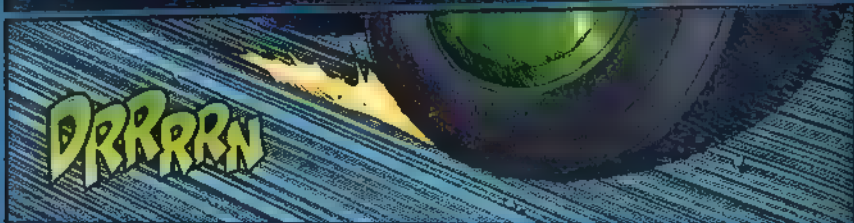
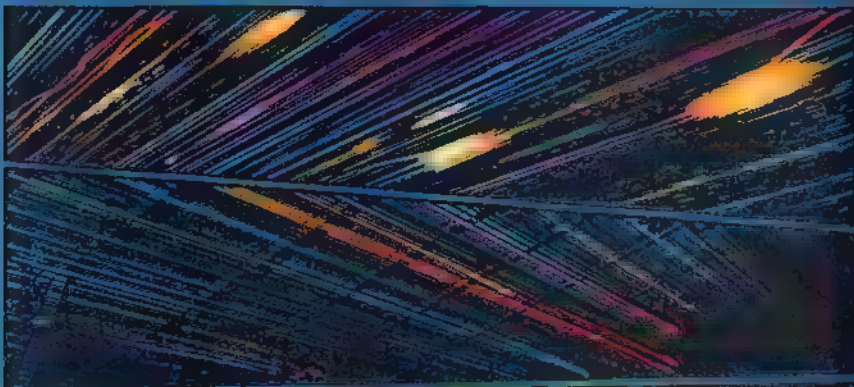
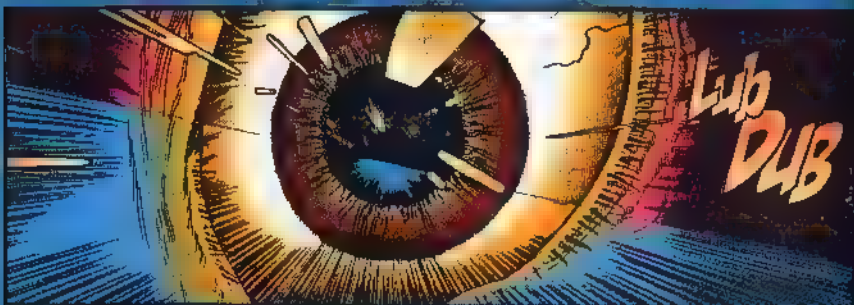
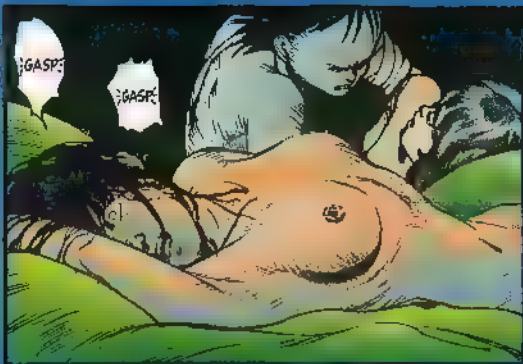


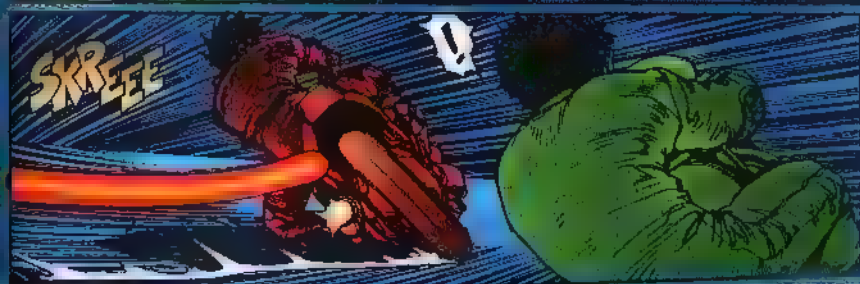
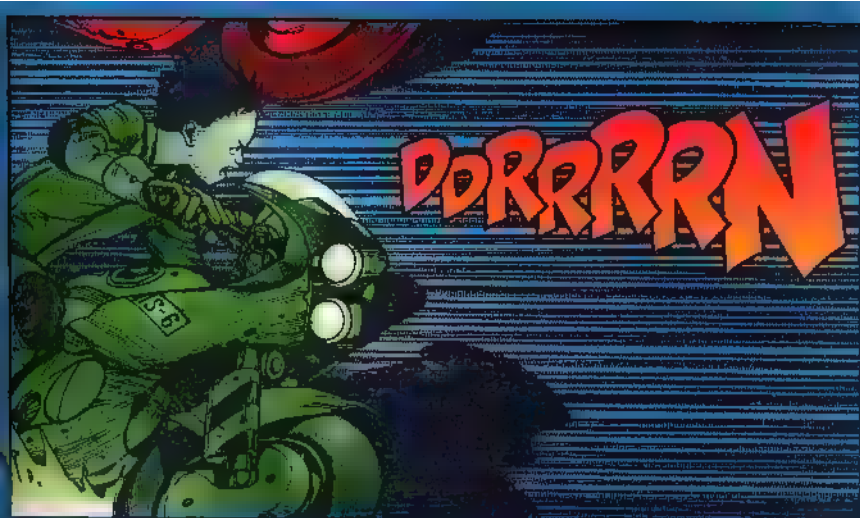
AHA!



THIS
MUST
BE
THEIR
HIDEOUT!









SOB!
SOB!

SOME KID IS
CRYING.



OH, YEAH!

IT'S ME!

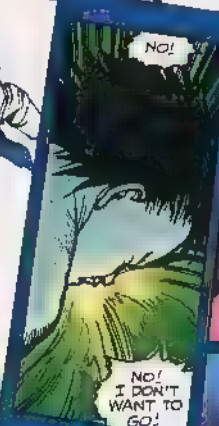
WHY AM I
CRYING?



AND
WHO ELSE IS
THERE?



WHERE
ARE YOU
TAKING
ME?



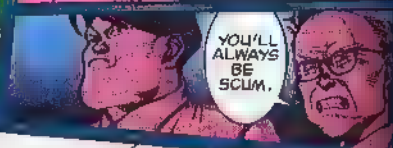
NO!

NO!
I DON'T
WANT TO
GO!

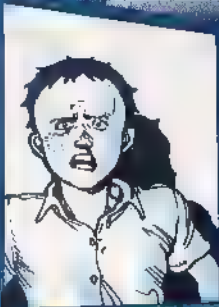


WE WILL
TEACH YOU
MANY
THINGS.

MOST
IMPORTANTLY,
WE WILL
TEACH
YOU...



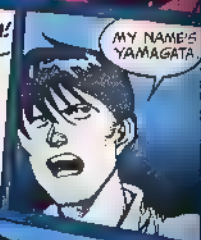
YOU'LL
ALWAYS
BE
SCUM.



BACK
OFF, YOU
PINHEADS!
LEAVE MY
FRIEND
ALONE!



KANEDA!



MY NAME'S
YAMAGATA.



PRRN



STOP
IT!

GASP

GASP

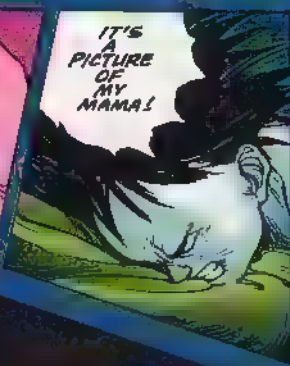


THAT'S
MINE!

GIVE
IT
BACK!



IT'S
A
PICTURE
OF
MY
MAMA!



SOB
SOB



THAT'S
NOT
TRUE
!

YOU
PICKED
IT UP
IN
THE
STREET,
DIDN'T
YOU?!

WHO ARE
YOU?
HOW DID
YOU
KNOW
THAT?!

WHAT?!

KAY!
WHERE
AM I?

KANEDA!

KANEDA!

NUMBER
41!

WHAT
IS
THIS
?!

THIS IS THE
MOMENT I'VE
BEEN WAITING
FOR!

BOOOM

ALL PRAISE
TO THE NEW
TOKYO
EMPIRE!

DON'T
GIVE
ME
A
THOUGHT!

THAT'S
NOT
TRUE.

WHAT
IS
THIS
CRAP
?!

IT'S GOTTA
BE AN
ILLUSION,
ALL
THIS IS
REALLY
JUST...

...THE
MOON...

NICE
GOING...
SETTING
YOURSELF
UP AS
KING OF A
GREAT BIG
PILE OF
JUNK!

NEXT ISSUE TO SAVE THE CHILDREN

AKIRA: the movie

AN UPDATE

Over the past two months, the English-language animated film **AKIRA**, as presented by **Streamline Pictures**, has opened in several cities around the U.S. **AKIRA** has received critical acclaim in many of these cities leading newspapers. Following are excerpts from **AKIRA** reviews.

"Katsuhiro Otomo's **AKIRA** is the most expensive animated feature ever made in Japan (over 1 billion yen) and it's easily the most impressive as well. The two-hour film is adapted from Otomo's popular biweekly comic and, in the manner of contemporary Japanese comics, it is super-colorful, explicitly violent, intellectually provocative and emotionally engaging with its Perils-of-Pauline pace. Otomo has condensed the narrative sprawl of the comics to provide coherence, though there's ■ bit of **BACK TO THE FUTURE PART II** incompleteness to the story. That hardly matters, since the film moves with such kinetic energy that you'll be hanging on for dear life.

"Of course, **AKIRA** is not ■ long cartoon, but an ambitious animated feature that can be seen as a parable of scientific responsibility and cosmic rebirth, or just an action-packed serial. Or it can be seen as a visceral example of the future of animation."

—THE WASHINGTON POST

"An impressive example of today's Tokyo animation style, **AKIRA** is ■ long way from Saturday morning cartoons."

—SAN FRANCISCO WEEKLY

"If an animated film can be called mammoth, then Katsuhiro Otomo's **AKIRA** is. Of course, all animated films consist of painted panels, but the futuristic **AKIRA** is full of huge metropolitan vistas and massive destructive effects."

—THE OREGONIAN

"...**AKIRA** is an astonishing piece of animation...Otomo has drawn his film with such amazing attention to scale, perspective, motion effects and panoramic viewpoints that some segments of it are dizzying.

"Others are so gritty, corrosive or violent, you almost feel assaulted.

"The frequently large-scale themes of **AKIRA** are fascinating, and have the tone of ■ disturbingly near future, just the other side of whatever nuclear holocaust seems to await us."

—SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"...the primary attraction is the artwork: the most expensive animated movie ever made in Japan, **AKIRA** offers exceptional detail, realistic lighting, and a palette ranging from DayGlo neon to dark-alley shadow (327 colors were used in all)—it makes **BLADE RUNNER** look like a filmstrip. Full of sometimes bloody ultraviolence and rampant destruction, this U.S. premiere is not for little kids, but it's indispensable to those with a serious interest in animated storytelling."

—WASHINGTON CITY PAPER

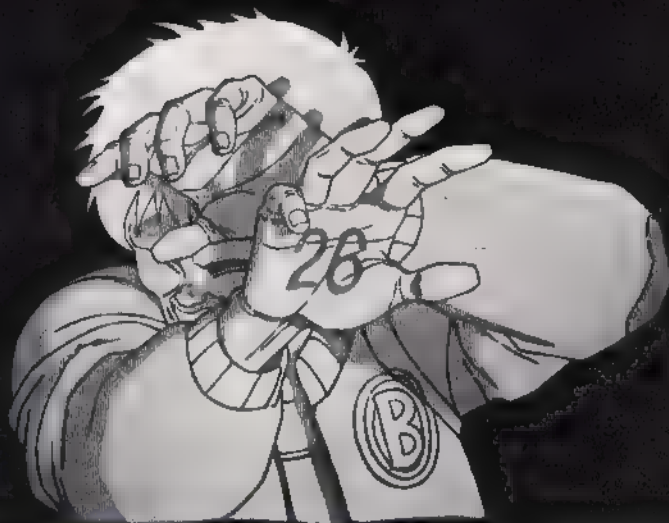
"Gang warfare, student protest, terrorism, military oppression, nuclear holocaust—these aren't the usual topics one thinks of in connection with cartoons.

"But then **AKIRA** is no ordinary cartoon."

—THE SEATTLE TIMES

"Are animated films really necessary? Why draw things that can just as easily be photographed? Generally, animators make objects perform stunts impossible anywhere but in their "magic" world. Yet sadly, most animated films are impoverished in imagination and theme. Even in a short film forged from line drawings, pieces of paper, or piles of soft clay, the secret of success is the story. And this is the secret of **AKIRA**."

—WILLAMETTE WEEK



"Readers of adult comic books should flock to Katsuhiro Otomo's revolutionary fable set in post-WWIII Neo-Tokyo.

"These post-punk punks are much like the pre-punk punks of **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE**, in a **BLADE RUNNER** setting designed by Otomo in smoothly animated, state-of-the-comic-art with bilingual visuals and an English soundtrack that's strangely devoid of music...

"Otomo provides a visual momentum that carries you forward, even when you don't know where you're going or why."

—SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN

"**AKIRA** represents state-of-the-art Japanese animation, with a blazing variety of colors and detailed background that reflect a great deal of creative imagination. The film can be savored for its visual quality alone."

—SEATTLE P-I

The English-language version of the animated film **AKIRA** will play in the following cities during the month of March:

CINCINNATI, OH
MOVIES REPERTORY CINEMA

February 28—March 6

DENVER, CO
OGDEN THEATER

March 7—10

LOUISVILLE, KY
VOGUE THEATER

March 16—22

AUSTIN, TX
DOBIE THEATER
March 16—open ended

SALT LAKE CITY, UT
CINEMA IN YOUR FACE

March 23—April 1

CHICAGO, IL
MUSIC BOX THEATER

March 30—April 5

LOS ANGELES, CA
GOLDWIN PAVILION

Mid-March

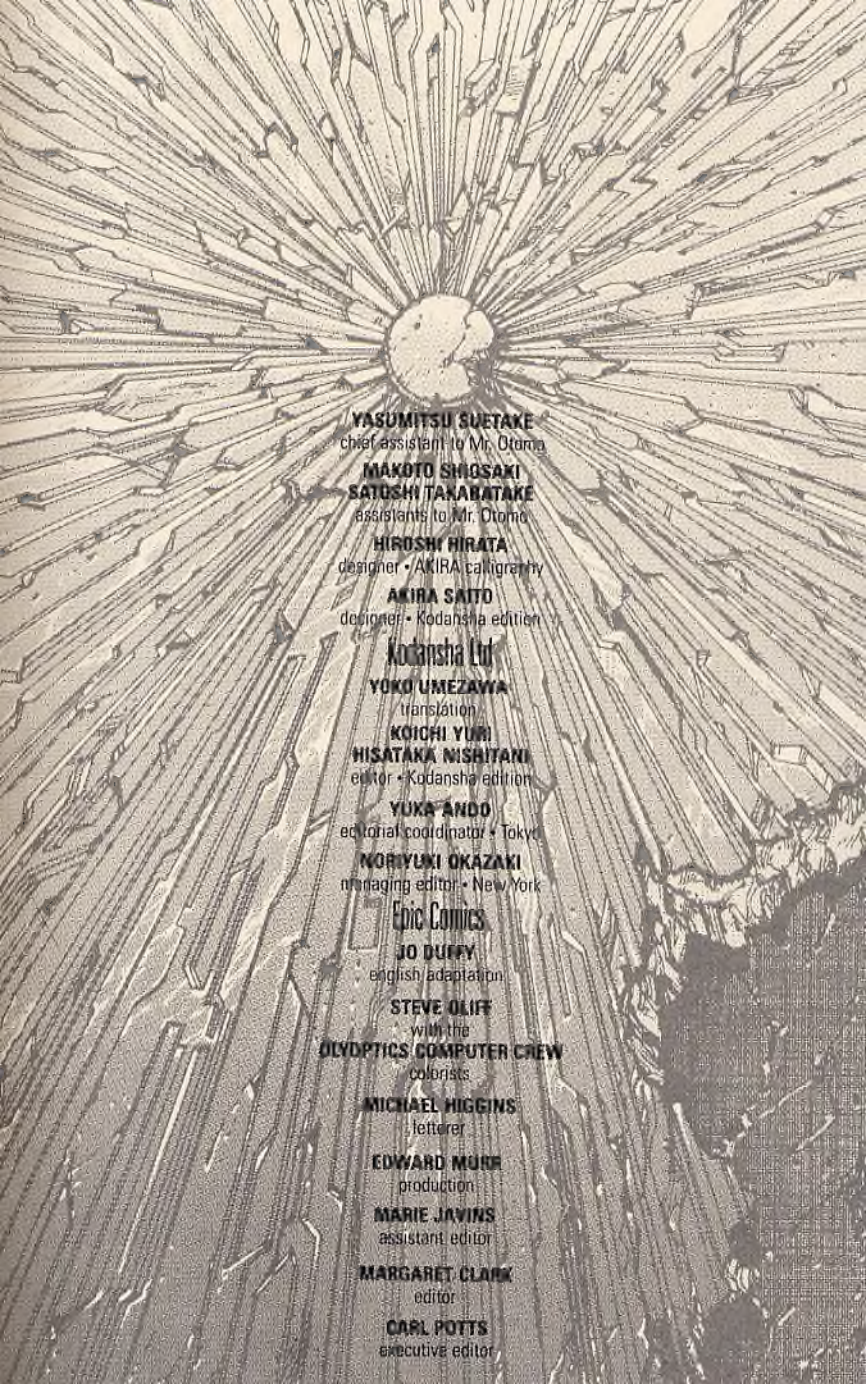
Also, look for **AKIRA** in the following theaters during the upcoming months:

CHICAGO, IL: MUSIC BOX THEATER (April 6 for one week)

HONOLULU, HI: THE ACADEMY THEATER (April 20-21)

CLEVELAND, OH: THE CLEVELAND CINEMATECH (April 26-28)

NEW YORK, NY: THE NEW FILM FORUM (summer, 1990)



YASUMITSU SUETAKE
chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

MAKOTO SHIOSAKI
SATOSHI TAKABATAKE
assistants to Mr. Otomo

HIROSHI HIRATA
designer • AKIRA calligraphy

AKIRA SATTO
designer • Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd

YOKO UMEZAWA
translation

KOICHI YUMI
HISATAKA NISHITANI
editor • Kodansha edition

YUKA ANDO
editorial coordinator • Tokyo

NORIYUKI OKAZAKI
managing editor • New York

Epic Comics

JO DUFFY
english adaptation

STEVE OLIF
with the
OLYOPTICS COMPUTER CREW
colorists

MICHAEL HIGGINS
letterer

EDWARD MURF
production

MARIE JAVINS
assistant editor

MARGARET CLARK
editor

CARL POTTS
executive editor

The world outside is a world gone mad. Suddenly, horribly it is evident what the law of the jungle means—only the strongest, or the well armed, survive. In this insane landscape, Kay and Chiyoko struggle to survive and protect their charges—Kiyoko and Masaru. These two small para-normal children whose unusual abilities helped save the women's lives are now the victims of their own powers which have started to destroy them from within. However, Kiyoko does gasp out that Number 19 can help them. With grim determination, the women set out across the city. They know time is running out and they know they must find Number 19.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA



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X-FUTURE

I love um

I buy um

I preserve um